

2/4/06

To: Federal Communications Commission

I have concerns about the implementation of new rules being proposed in the FCC's "Notice of Proposed Rulemaking" 05-311 on "video franchising". Public access television, which I understand is threatened by these new rules, has had an enormous impact on my life. I started producing The Brini Maxwell Show, a television show on local access TV in New York City in 1998. The show has since gone on to a slot on the Style Network, a national cable network owned by E! Entertainment Television. It's currently in its second season and none of this would have been possible without the opportunity provided by Manhattan Neighborhood Network. These public, educational and governmental television stations are an important part of the community. They provide access to the other members of the community to communicate ideas, information and to provide a platform for people who would be otherwise cut off from the opportunity to create and distribute television programs that aren't constricted by focus groups or the board room. Public access programming is on the leading edge of television because it doesn't have corporate America to answer to. I would hate to see this resource made unavailable for others like myself by a change in policy that's not in the public's interest to begin with.

The other changes proposed seem designed to break down protections for customers of broadcast media in a more global way. Local franchising is important to our local cities and communities. It strikes me as important that local citizens and communities have control over the telecommunications and media in their area, and that telecommunications companies are accountable to the needs of consumers. From what I understand about the matter, without local franchises local communities will be stripped of an adequate way to make sure companies charge reasonable rates, respond to customer complaints, or that they provide universal service. I hope any changes in the rules will keep customer protections intact and will ensure the continued support of public access to the airwaves.

Thank you for your attention to my concerns.

Sincerely,

Ben Sander